

12 years of social inclusion through digital inclusion

C D I

committee for democracy
in information technology

NEW YORK OFFICE



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introduction

Over the past decades the world has experienced one of the greatest periods of technological innovation in history. The 'Digital Revolution' has led to dramatic expansion of the global economy, transformed the way we live and generated tremendous wealth—but only for some parts of the world.

Latin America has been left behind. In the past years, poverty, violence, and income inequality have all increased in the region. Today nearly 40% of Latin Americans live below the poverty line. Quality education and healthcare are scarce; unemployment borders 20%. Unable to meet their basic needs, Latin Americans lack many of the opportunities taken for granted in the developing world. The results: rising unemployment and crime—especially among youth, which make up the majority of the population.

As soldiers on the frontlines of the growing drug wars, underprivileged Latin youth have become the subjects of alarming statistics. Today they are among the greatest victims of violence in the world—killed at even higher rates than in Iraq or other war-torn regions. Violence, like poverty, does not select its victims equally. Young impoverished males living in urban settings are most likely to be killed. Those that do survive find themselves unable to enter the job market. While estimates show that workers in the Knowledge Economy require 12 years of formal education, Latin Americans have only 6.

Knowledge and information are the world's new common currencies, but only privileged minorities have been awarded access. Of the world's 6 billion people, for example, just 1 billion have access to the internet. Speaking of this gap, James Wolfensohn, former President of the World Bank, has called the digital divide "one of the greatest impediments to development today".

In Latin America, this exclusion has deepened existing social gaps and created castes of marginalized populations that are unable participate in society as self-governing, active citizens. This is a pattern that hinders democracy, businesses, public well-being, and translates into issues that are of global concern such as the drug industry, immigration, and violence.

Technology is one of the most powerful catalysts of change at hand today. But technology, in itself, is just a tool. Guaranteeing access is relatively simple. The true challenge is making technology relevant and useful in the context of these marginalized populations.

Since 1995, CDI has empowered disadvantaged groups to use Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs) as tools to exercise their full capacities as citizens and tackle the issues that affect their communities. CDI's experience has proven that local appropriation of technology fights poverty, stimulates entrepreneurship, and empowers poor youth and adults to find solutions to their problems and become agents of their own destinies. CDI's mission is to promote social inclusion through digital inclusion; our dream is to use the appeal and power of technology to form a new generation of changemakers.



organization

The Committee for Democracy in Information Technology, or simply CDI, was founded in 1995 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with the mission of promoting the social inclusion of underprivileged populations by using ICT education and technology to fight poverty, stimulate entrepreneurship, strengthen communities, and empower poor youth and adults to transform their realities by becoming informed, active citizens.

model — To do this, CDI partners with hundreds of community-based grassroots organizations to establish informal learning centers known as *Technology & Civic Engagement Schools*. Partner organizations undergo a selection process that seeks to identify the most well-established and respected organizations already working inside these poor communities. They are expected to provide a space in which the CDI School will function as well as volunteers to manage and work in the Schools. All CDI Schools are self-sustaining and self-managed by members of the communities themselves. CDI Educators are also members of the communities, usually poor youth and adults who are able to find a new occupation after receiving training to implement the CDI curriculum.

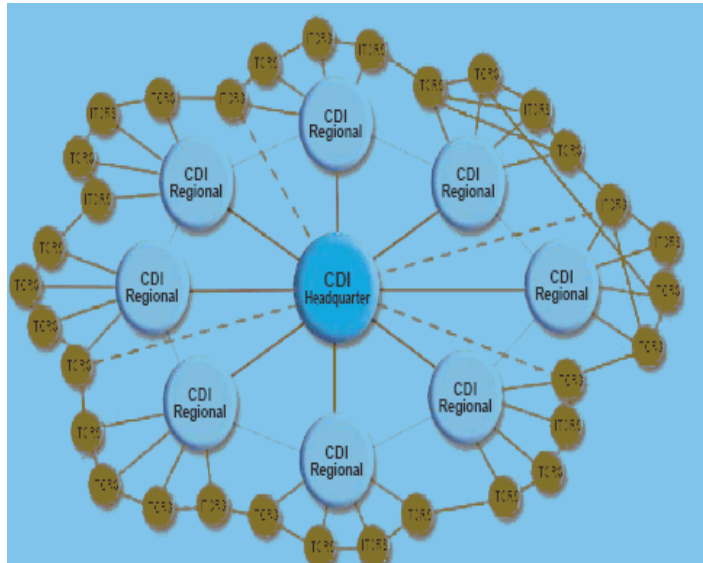
In exchange, CDI provides free computers and software, implements the educational methodology, offers ongoing capacity building for Educators and Coordinators, monitors the Schools' progress, and facilitates collaboration and exchange of best practices among all 840 Schools in the CDI Network.

methodology — CDI's exclusive curriculum is based on the work of renowned Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and integrates digital education with civic education. Freire believed education should be used as a tool for social change and civic empowerment. He argued for the development of a critical consciousness by engaging both student and teacher in active dialogue. According to the Freirian model, students should be encouraged to reflect upon the world around them, question and challenge their realities, and embrace their own capacities to evoke social change.

CDI's educational curriculum was carefully put together to reflect Freire's theories and adapt his beliefs to the Digital Era. Each and every CDI lesson plan has both a technical aim and a civic aim. Our goal is that, by the end of a 4-month course, students will have used technology as the main tool to initiate, plan, implement and complete a "social advocacy project" aimed at changing an aspect of their realities. First, students are asked to identify a common challenge facing their community and prepare an action plan to overcome it. Issues can range from sexual abuse, pollution, violence, crime, teenage pregnancy, and drugs, to lack of healthcare, schools, paved sidewalks, etc. Whatever is and relevant to their community's well-being. Students then take the technical skills they've learned in class to tackle the problem, mobilize their communities, engage in advocacy and awareness campaigns, and work together to solve that specific problem.

network — CDI Schools form the CDI Network, which functions as a not-for-profit 'social franchise' and is coordinated through 36 Regional Offices in eight countries. The Regional Offices follow CDI quality and educational guidelines, monitor local schools and report to Headquarters, in Rio, which in turn supervises and supports the entire network.

Today, the CDI Network is made up of 840 Schools in 8 countries—Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay and South Africa. CDI Schools are located primarily inside urban slums and low-income communities. There are also special-focus CDI Schools in indigenous villages, maximum security prisons, juvenile delinquency centers, homeless shelters, and institutions that assist individuals with special mental or physical needs.



impact — More than 600,000 poor youth and adults have been impacted by CDI—last year alone over 70,000 people were benefited by CDI programs. According to an external impact evaluation, 87% of CDI students said their lives changed positively after CDI, which means many of them went on to find better jobs, open small businesses, continue their education and become agents of change within their communities. The report also showed that 65% of CDI beneficiaries are between the ages of 10 and 18; 56% are women; 65% are Afro-Brazilians and 63% have no source of income.

need — Only 17% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean have access to the internet (compared to 70% in the United States and Canada). In Brazil, the first *Map of Digital Exclusion* (published in 2002 by USAID, Sun Microsystems and business school Fundação Getúlio Vargas), revealed that just 12% of Brazilians owned computers and only 8% accessed the internet from home. Five years later, not much has changed in the world's 10th largest economy—recent studies show that 79% of Brazil's 180 million people still have never accessed the internet and 54% have never used a computer. The digital divide undermines development efforts and substantially disadvantages the poor, who are pushed even further towards the sidelines of global economy and isolated from employment, educational and other opportunities.

recognition — CDI has become one of Latin America's most distinguished nonprofit organizations in the past 12 years having received over 40 awards from both national and international organizations including Ashoka, UNESCO, Schwab Foundation, World Economic Forum, Time Magazine, CNN, Fortune, Tech Museum and others. CDI Founder & Executive Director, Rodrigo Baggio has been named by the World Economic Forum as one of the world's 100 Young Global Leaders and by Time Magazine as one of the 50 Leaders in Latin America that will make a difference in the Third Millennium. In 2006, CNN also selected Baggio and CDI as one of the world's three Principal Voices in the field of Economic Development along with 2006 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Muhammad Yunus and Jeffrey Sachs, Head of the UN's Millennium Development Goals.



partners — CDI's current institutional partners include Vale do Rio Doce Foundation, Philips, Accenture, Skoll Foundation, ABN Amro Bank, USAID, Microsoft, Avina, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Exxon and Carrefour Foundation.



supporters — Other in-kind supporters include Unesco, Globo (Brazilian media conglomerate), Unicef, Giovanni + Draft FCB, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Ashoka, Barbosa Müssnich & Aragão, Schwab Foundation, Terra, Domingues e Pinho Contadores, and Sucesu.





5 reasons we're different

scale — CDI has developed a pioneer model that has overcome what is known as the 'classic pilot syndrome', i.e. the difficulty of scaling up and replicating a project that is successful on a grassroots level to a global level. Over the past 12 years, the CDI model has been successfully implemented in 8 countries. The structure of the CDI Network creates a positive ripple effect that leverages CDI's impact transnationally, which means that supporting a school in Chile can affect other schools in places as far as the Amazon Forest. While maintaining a strong local foothold and 'bottom-up' identity (schools are run by community members), the CDI Network also allows a more global 'top-down' approach.

curriculum — Providing accessible hardware is the easy part of the equation. If it were the entire solution, defeating poverty would be as simple as purchasing computers! The questions to ask are: What should these communities *do* with technology? How can they best use it to bring about change in a way that's relevant to their specific contexts? CDI's greatest value is its educational curriculum—a combination of civic and digital education that seeks to help people help themselves by empowering poor youth and adults to understand the challenges that face their communities and work together to solve them.

local ownership & content — CDI believes that underprivileged communities themselves are better positioned than governments or companies to decide how to solve the problems that affect them locally. This is why the CDI model places a premium on shared responsibility and local ownership, entrusting community members to manage and coordinate their own schools. Instead of imposing a one-size-fits-all set of issues, CDI prefers to let communities decide what is relevant to them and what is not. This also stimulates the production of local content, an increasingly valuable asset at a time when user-oriented Web 2.0 concepts take a more active role in shaping our societies.

credibility — CDI's work has been independently reviewed and recognized by companies, multilateral organizations, and news media around the world. The impact of our work has been acknowledged by more than 40 awards. In addition, all of our financial reports have been audited on a pro bono basis by Ernst & Young and Deloitte & Touche and are available upon request.

no handout approach — In our view, handouts create dependency and fail to address the root of the problem. We seek to empower changemakers and enable poor youth and adults to become self-sufficient by fostering the concepts of exchange and collaboration—everyone pitching in to achieve a common goal. An example of this are the symbolic fees charged at all CDI Schools. These fees range from \$2-\$10 a month, depending on the local reality, and go towards maintaining the School and compensating Educators. If a student cannot afford the fee, he/she may instead volunteer at the School in exchange for participating in the classes. CDI celebrates this involvement and counts on over 1,000 active volunteers throughout our 840 schools.